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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 PHNOM PENH 5465

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, MOPS, ECON, CB
SUBJECT: KHMER REPORT -- MARCH 25, 1975

GENERAL

1. THE GKR FINALLY ANNOUNCED ITS LONG AWAITED NEW CABINET, AGAIN HEADED BY PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET. BORET IN PRESENTING THE NEW MINISTERS TO PARLIAMENT SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS READY FOR ANY SACRIFICE DEMANDED OF IT IN THE INTERESTS OF A NEGOTIATED PEACE. THE RESHUFFLED CABINET DOES NOT REPRESENT ANY STARTLING CHANGES IN PERSONNEL OR COMPETENCE, ALTHOUGH FACT THAT FANK CHIEF OF STAFF IS ALSO A DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER MAY ASSIST CIVILIAN-MILITARY COOPERATION. IN AT LEAST THREE INSTANCES FORMER COMPETENT MINISTERS WERE REPLACED BY NONENTITIES OR WORSE. PRESIDENT LON NOL'S CONTROVERSIAL YOUNGER BROTHER PLACED SOME OF HIS SUPPORTERS IN THE CABINET, BUT HIS OPPONENTS STRENGTHENED THEIR POSITION EVEN MORE. THE OTHER SIDE CELEBRATED ITS FIFTH ANNIVERSARY, WHILE SIHANOUK REPEATEDLY REJECTED ANY KIND OF NEGOTIATIONS OR COMPROMISE WITH THE GKR, EVEN SHOULD LON NOL AND HIS KEY COLLEAGUES LEAVE THE SCENE. KC PROPAGANDA ALSO TOOK GREAT SATISFACTION
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IN THE DEPARTURE FROM PHNOM PENH OF SEVERAL MORE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS. MILITARILY, THE KC STEPPED UP THEIR ROCKET ATTACKS AGAINST BOTH PHNOM PENH AND POCHENTONG AIRFIELD, SCORING ENOUGH ACCURATE HITS AGAINST THE LATTER TO FORCE THE TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF THE AIRLIFT. ALONG THE LOWER ME-KONG, FRIENDLY FORCES LOST ANOTHER ISLAND, BUT EFFECTIVELY BEAT OFF KC GROUND PROBES. FANK UNITS ALSO CAME UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE AT VARIOUS POINTS AROUND THE PHNOM PENH

DEFENSE PERIMETER, BUT GENERALLY FOUGHT WELL. THE BIG DISAPPOINTMENT WAS THE FAILURE OF THE FANK OPERATION AGAINST ROCKET LAUNCHING AREAS NEAR POCHENTONG TO MAKE ANY LASTING PROGRESS. THE OPERATION NOW IS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE. PRICES IN PHNOM PENH REMAINED STABLE FOR THE MOST PART, BUT THE AIRLIFT, HAMPERED BY ROCKET ATTACKS, WAS BRINGING IN LESS RICE THAN REQUIRED, CAUSING STOCKS TO DWINDLE SOMEWHAT.

POLITICAL (INTERNAL)

2. AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS OF INDECISIVE BACKSTAGE MANEUVERING AMONG COMPETING POLITICAL ELEMENTS, THE GKR FINALLY ANNOUNCED ITS NEW CABINET ON MARCH 21. LONG BORET REMAINS PRIME MINISTER AND THERE ARE NUMEROUS OTHER HOLDOVERS FROM THE PREVIOUS CABINET. THERE IS NO POLITICAL PARTY PARTICIPATION EXCEPT FOR THE RULING SOCIO-REPUBLICAN PARTY WHOSE LEADERS IS PRESIDENT LON NOL, AND THERE ARE TWO INDEPENDENT MINISTERS. THE ONE MILITARY MAN IN THE CABINET IS LIEUTENANT GENERAL SAK SUTSAKHAN WHO WILL SERVE AS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY LEADING THE ARMED FORCES AS FANK'S CHIEF OF STAFF. (HIS CONTROVERSIAL PREDECESSOR, SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, LEFT PHNOM PENH THIS WEEK FOR FRANCE, OSTENSIBLY FOR A VACATION AND MEDICAL TREATMENT -- HE IS A DIABETIC.) SAK SUTSAKHAN'S PRESENCE IN THE CABINET WAS PUSHED BY CIVILIAN ELEMENTS WHO HAVE LONG RESENTED THEIR LACK OF CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY AND HOPE THAT THIS ARRANGEMENT WILL FACILITATE CIVILIAN-MILITARY COOPERATION. ONE HOPES THAT HE WILL HAVE ENOUGH TIME LEFT AFTER THE INTERMINABLE CABINET MEETINGS TO BE ABLE TO MANAGE FANK.

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3. LON NOL'S CONTROVERSIAL YOUNGER BROTHER, LON NON, MANAGED TO PLACE SOME SUPPORTERS IN THE CABINET, BUT THE ONLY IMPORTANT PORTFOLIO HIS GROUP GAINED WAS THAT OF INFORMATION MINISTER. FURTHERMORE, THE PARTY FACTION OPPOSING HIM SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED ITS POSITION AS WELL. COMMENT: THE CABINET IS BASICALLY NOTHING MORE THAN A RESHUFFLE. IT PRESENTS LITTLE NEW IN EITHER PERSONALITIES OR LEVEL OF ABILITY. IT RETAINS SEVERAL COMPETENT HOLDOVERS, BUT, UNHAPPILY, THREE GOOD MEN WERE DROPPED. IT IS UNLIKELY, THEREFORE, TO ATTRACT POPULAR CONFIDENCE OR SUPPORT OR TO BE REGARDED AS A POSSIBLE PRELIMINARY TO NEGOTIATIONS.

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4. PUBLIC OPINION AND THE KHMER PRESS HAVE TREATED THE NEW CABINET IN UNSURPRISING FASHION. THERE HAS BEEN SOME DISAPPOINTMENT THAT EVEN AT THIS CRITICAL TIME KHMER POLITICS WENT ON AS USUAL, BUT THERE IS ALSO A SOMEWHAT CYNICAL WILLINGNESS TO WAIT AND SEE IF THIS CABINET WILL BE ANY MORE EFFECTIVE THAN ITS PREDECESSORS. THE PRESS CONTINUES ALSO TO FOCUS CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION ON THE PUBLIC DEBATE IN THE U.S. OVER THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FOR THE GKR, AND ITS COMMENTS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY BITTER AS TO U.S. INTENTIONS AND MOTIVES. ONE PAPER, FOR EXAMPLE, REFERRED TO THE AMERICANS AS "MASTER DECEIVERS." THE PRESS ALSO REFLECTS THE CURRENT SPATE OF RUMOR AND GOSSIP ON THE POSSIBILITY OF LON NOL'S DEPARTURE.

POLITICAL (EXTERNAL)

5. THE BRITISH AND PHILIPPINE EMBASSIES CLOSED DOWN AND LEFT PHNOM PENH DURING THE WEEK. EMBASSIES OR MISSIONS STILL HERE OTHER THAN OURSELVES ARE THE THAI, SOUTH VIETNAMESE, SOUTH KOREANS, NATIONALIST CHINESE, JAPANESE, MALAYSIANS, INDONESIANS AND THE SMALL FRENCH
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CONSULAR AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS PRESENCE (SEE LAST WEEK'S KHMER REPORT). THE REMAINING EMBASSIES AND MISSIONS FOR THE MOST PART CONTINUE TO TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE THEIR OFFICIAL STAFFS.

6. HIGH OFFICIALS OF THE NEW THAI CABINET HAVE MADE SEVERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS DURING THE PAST WEEK ABOUT THE NECESSITY FOR LIMITING OR STOPPING U.S. MILITARY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES OUT OF THAILAND FOR CAMBODIA. THERE HAS, HOWEVER, BEEN NO OFFICIAL REPRESENTATION MADE TO OUR EMBASSY IN BANGKOK AND THE AIRLIFT OF AMMUNITION AND FUEL PRODUCTS FROM THAILAND TO PHNOM PENH IS CONTINUING.

7. THE GKR CHARGE IN THE USSR AND TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY HAVE BEEN TOLD BY THE GKR FOREIGN MINISTRY TO DEPART MOSCOW, LEAVING ONE EMPLOYEE BEHIND AS A CARETAKER. (THE GKR MISSION IN WARSAW IS ALSO BEING CUT BACK.) THERE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN NO POLITICAL PRESSURE AS YET FROM THE RUSSIANS TO CLOSE DOWN, DESPITE RECENT PRO-GRUNK STATEMENTS BY SOVIET PROPAGANDA MEDIA (SEE GRUNK/FUNK SECTION BELOW). THE MOVES ARE PART OF A GENERAL GKR CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE BUDGETARY AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE EXPENSES THROUGH PERSONNEL CUTS.

8. UN PRESS SPOKESMEN DECLARED DURING THE WEEK THAT UN REPRESENTATIVES IN CAMBODIA WILL REMAIN AS LONG AS THEY ARE SAFE AND CAN EFFECTIVELY CARRY OUT THEIR ASSIGNMENTS. THE EFFORTS OF UNICEF IN PHNOM PENH WERE PUBLICIZED AT SOME LENGTH, AND THE UN SPOKESMEN ADDED THAT SOME UNICEF ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN SENT TO KC-CONTROLLED AREAS. (NOTE: THE UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE (A CANADIAN) HERE HAS TOLD US HE INTENDS TO STAY ON SHOULD THE KC TAKE OVER. HE HAS ALSO REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STEPPED-UP RICE DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM UNDER TITLE II OF PL-480.)

9. FOREIGN MINISTER KEUKY LIM DEPARTED MARCH 14 FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE IN GENEVA. LIM INTENDS TO STAY ONLY A SHORT TIME BEFORE RETURNING TO PHNOM PENH. COMMENT: FOR THE MOMENT THE PROBLEM OF

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A CHALLENGE TO GKR CREDENTIALS DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY TO ARISE.

GRUNK/FUNK

10. THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARCH 23 "FOUNDING" OF FUNK AND THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLES NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMED FORCES (CPNLAF) WAS CELEBRATED WITH CONSIDERABLE FANFARE AND BOMBAST BY THE OTHER SIDE AND ITS ALLIES. THERE WERE STATEMENTS, BANQUETS AND PRESS CONFERENCES IN PEKING, PARIS, ALGIERS AND OTHER HOSPITABLE LOCA-

TIONS. KHIEU SAMPHAN SPOKE AT AN IN-COUNTRY MEETING WHOSE PARTICIPANTS RESOLVED TO "FULFILL ALL REVOLUTIONARY TASKS" ON THE FRONT LINE AND IN THE REAR AREAS AND VOWED, AS USUAL, TO FIGHT "WITHOUT COMPROMISE OR RETREAT UNTIL TOTAL AND PERMANENT VICTORY IS WON." THERE WERE ALSO MANY BROADCASTS DESCRIBING IN DETAIL THE "TRIUMPS" OF THE CPNLA SINCE 1970 AND DURING THE CURRENT OFFENSIVE.

11. THE USUAL TELEGRAMS MARKING THE ANNIVERSARY WERE SENT BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, NORTH KOREANS, PATHET LAO, ETC. PRC PROPAGANDA CONTINUED TO STATE THAT GRUNK VICTORY WAS INEVITABLE AND FURTHER U.S. ASSISTANCE FUTILE; CHOU-EN-LAI AND CHU TE SENT CONGRATULATIONS TO SIHANOUK. EVEN SOME OF THE OTHER SIDE'S MORE AMBIVALENT ALLIES IN EASTERN EUROPE CHIPPED IN WITH CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES. THE USSR'S PODGORNYY SENT ONE (SOVIET PROPAGANDA ARTICLES PRAISING GRUNK BEGAN TO APPEAR MORE FREQUENTLY THAN USUAL AS WELL), AND SO DID THE POLISH COUNCIL OF STATE CHAIRMAN. THE PRC, APPARENTLY WANTING TO DEMONSTRATE TO GRUNK WHO ITS REAL FRIENDS ARE, ATTACKED THE USSR FOR "TRAITOROUS REVISIONISM" IN THE PAST FOR ALLEGEDLY BANKING ON A LONG-TERM SUCCESS AND FOR ITS EXPEDIENT CHANGE NOW THAT GRUNK'S FORTUNES ARE ON THE UPSWING.

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12. SIHANOUK CONTINUED TO ISSUE STATEMENTS VIRTUALLY
ON A DAILY BASIS. ON MARCH 18, THE ANNIVERSARY OF
HIS DEPOSITION, HE DECLARED THAT HE REMAINS THE ONLY
LEGAL HEAD OF CAMBODIA AND REAFFIRMED HIS AND GRUNK'S

FIRM OPPOSITION TO ANY KIND OF NEGOTIATIONS. POSSIBLY IN RESPONSE TO RUMORS EMANATING FROM PHNOM PENH, HE TOLD AYUGOSLAV PUBLICATION THAT THERE WOULD BE NO NEGOTIATIONS OR COALITION EVEN IF THE U.S. "DISMISSED ALL SEVEN TRAITORS WITH LON NOL AT THEIR HEAD", AND ADDED THAT HIS OLD FRIEND, SENATOR MANSFIELD, WOULD GET THE SAME ANSWER SHOULD HE INQUIRE. HE ECHOED IN-COUNTRY CLAIMS THAT THE KC CONTROL 97 PERCENT OF CAMBODIAA'S TERRITORY AND 6 MILLION PEOPLE (CONTRASTED WITH PAST BOASTS OF 90 PERCENT AND 5.5 MILLION). IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW, THE PRINCE CLAIMED THAT THE GKR MIGHT BE ABLE TO LAST AS MUCH AS A YEAR LONGER BECAUSE THE KC ARE NOT ATTACKING PHNOM PENH DIRECTLY BUT WAGING A WAR OF ATTRITION. HE ADDED THAT THE KC HAD TOLD HIM THAT CAMBODIA WOULD NOT BE COMMUNIST IN THE EVENT OF THEIR TAKING OVER. AT A PEKING RECEPTION ON THE OCCASION OF THE FUNK-CPNLAF ANNIVERSARY, SIHANOUK REITERATED

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AGAIN THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF COMPROMISE OR NEGOTIATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF ALLEGED U.S. EFFORTS TO GET LON NOL OUT OF PHNOM PENH. HE ATTACKED IN VIRULENT TERMS THE NEW GKR CABINET AND SPECIFIC MEMBERS OF IT (HANG THUN HAK, PAN SOTHI, SAK SUTSAKHAN) AND REJECTED "TOTALLY AND DEFINITELY THIS NEW DESPICABLE MANEUVER OF U.S. IMPERIALISM...". ACCORDING TO AFP'S REPORT OF THE SPEECH, SIHANOUK STEPPED UP HIS TIMETABLE FOR TOTAL VICTORY, PREDICTING THIS WOULD OCCUR "DURING THE COMING WEEKS".

13. FUNK IN-COUNTRY PROPAGANDA ALSO NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THE DEPARTURE OF VARIOUS FOREIGN MISSIONS FROM PHNOM PENH (SEE EXTERNAL SECTION ABOVE), CLAIMING THAT THIS HAS FURTHER ISOLATED THE "SEVEN TRAITORS" AND CAUSED THEM TO PANIC SINCE "THEIR DOOMSDAY IS NOT FAR OFF".

ECONOMIC

14. PRICES WERE GENERALLY STABLE BUT SOME SHOWED SLIGHT INCREASES IN PHNOM PENH RETAIL MARKETS DURING THE PAST WEEK. LOCAL RICE, PORK, FRESH WATER FISH, CHARCOAL, AND MOST VEGETABLES WERE UNCHANGED. THE BLACK MARKET PRICES OF U.S. RICE ROSE 3 PERCENT, OCEAN FISH 9 PERCENT, BEEF 15 PERCENT, AND SOAP POWDER 5 PERCENT. GREEN BEANS AND CAULIFLOWER WERE UP 22 PERCENT, CABBAGE AND SQUASH INCREASED 29 PERCENT, AND SWEET PEPPERS INCREASED 10 PERCENT. BUCKING THE TREND, POULTRY DECLINED 7 PERCENT, AND ORANGES DROPPED 4

PERCENT. THE BLACK MARKET EXCHANGE RATE INCREASED FROM 2,100 TO 2,200 RIELS PER DOLLAR DURING THE WEEK. THE PRICE OF GOLD SLIPPED SLIGHTLY, FROM 156 TO 153 DOLLARS PER TROY OUNCE.

15. RICE STOCKS ON MARCH 24 AMOUNTED TO 8,130 METRIC TONS REPRESENTING A 13-DAY SUPPLY LEVEL. THE DAILY AVERAGE OF THE RICE AIRLIFT NOW STANDS AT 12 SORTIES AND 480 M/T. THIS IS CONSIDERABLY BELOW THE REQUIRED DAILY DISTRIBUTION LEVEL AND WAS DUE IN LARGE PART TO THE AIRLIFT SUSPENSION AS A RESULT OF INCOMING ROCKETS (SEE CONFIDENTIAL

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MILITARY SECTION BELOW).

16. ON MARCH 21 KHMER GOVERNMENT AND AID OFFICIALS MET WITH PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES IN KOMPONG SOM TO ESTABLISH A TITLE II RICE FACILITY AND ORGANIZE AN AIRLIFT TO SUPPLY RICE FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION TO REFUGEES AND NEEDY KHMERS IN THE MARITIME PROVINCES AND ENCLAVES. LOCAL CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES WILL COORDINATE THE AIRLIFT AND USE COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT. CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE (CRS) BEGAN AIRLIFTING TITLE II RICE TO KOMPONG THOM ON MARCH 20 FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION TO REFUGEES. TWO DAYS LATER, ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE FOR CRS AND WORLD VISION TO USE THE AIRCRAFT ON ALTERNATE DAYS IN ORDER TO REACH AS WIDE A SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION AS POSSIBLE. PLANS ARE NOW UNDERWAY TO ADD ADDITIONAL PLANES AND INCREASE THE DAILY LIFT TONNAGE.

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17. OVER 2,000 OF THE ESTIMATED 8,000 REFUGEES AND MILITARY DEPENDENTS AT THE ROUTE 4 GARRISON OF KOMPONG SEILA WERE AIRLIFTED TO PHNOM PENH AND KOMPONG SOM LAST WEEK. UNDER SEIGE SINCE MAY 15, 1974, KOMPONG SEILA HAS DEPENDED ENTIRELY ON AIRDROPS OF RICE AND AMMO DURING THAT TIME. THE GENERAL HEALTH CONDITIONS THERE ARE SURPRISINGLY GOOD CONSIDERING THE SUFFERING THE PEOPLE HAVE ENDURED. CRS IS DISTRIBUTING RELIEF COMMODITIES AND FOOD TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN EVACUATED. IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES ARE SCATTERED ALONG THE ROAD FROM BATTAMBANG CITY TO POIPET ON THE THAI BORDER AS A RESULT OF RECENT FIGHTING. A MINISTRY OF REFUGEE TEAM IS SURVEYING THE NEW REFUGEES AND ARRANGING RELIEF ASSISTANCE FOR THEM.

MILITARY

18. KC ROCKET ATTACKS AGAINST BOTH POCHENTONG AIRPORT AND PHNOM PENH INCREASED DURING THE WEEK. MANY OF THE ROUNDS FIRED AT THE CITY LANDED IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF TOWN, NEAR THE AMERICAN EMBASSY AND OTHER FRIENDLY DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS. AT POCHENTONG, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ROUNDS WAS NOT PARTICULARLY LARGE, BUT A GREATER PERCENTAGE OF THE SHELLS LANDED IN THE UNLOADING AREA

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FOR THE AIRLIFT. ONE SUCH ATTACK TEMPORARILY DISABLED A STRETCH DC-8 AND A C-130. THE TWO PLANES WERE SUBSEQUENTLY FLOWN OUT SAFELY, BUT THE AIRLIFT WAS SUSPENDED FOR THIRTY-SIX HOURS, RESUMING MARCH 24.

19. THE OPERATION TO CLEAN OUT THE ROCKET-LAUNCHING AREAS NORTHWEST OF POCHENTONG WHICH BEGAN SO WELL WITH THE CAPTURE OF TUOL LEAP (SEE LAST WEEK'S KHMER REPORT) HAS GROUND TO A HALT. THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS ARE LACK OF COORDINATION AND AGGRESSIVENESS AMONG THE COMMANDERS CONCERNED, AS WELL AS INSUFFICIENT TROOPS. ONE BRIGADE ABANDONED THREE POSITIONS (ONE HAS BEEN RETAKEN) WHICH FURTHER HAMPERED EFFORTS TO GET THE OPERATION OFF THE GROUND. THE KC TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS TO ATTACK TUOL LEAP ITSELF AND RETOOK IT THE NIGHT OF MARCH 24-25. OPERATIONS FURTHER NORTHEAST AGAINST OTHER ROCKET-LAUNCHING POSITIONS HAVE BEEN SIMILARLY BEDEVILED BY THE PROBLEMS OF INADEQUATE LEADERSHIP AND INSUFFICIENT TROOPS. IN SUM, KC ROCKET ATTACKS AGAINST POCHENTONG AND THE AIRLIFT CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE.

20. AT BANAM AND NEAK LUONG ALONG THE LOWER MEKONG,

THE KC DIRECTED HEAVY ATTACKS BY FIRE AGAINST ALL POSITIONS AND SUCCESSFULLY PUSHED FRIENDLY TROOPS OFF THE LAST TWO NEARBY ISLANDS WHERE FANK HAD A PRESENCE. THE KC THEN LAUNCHED DIRECT FIRE ATTACKS AGAINST A KHMER NAVY MOBILE SUPPORT BASE ANCHORED JUST OFF ONE OF THE ISLANDS, SETTING IT ON FIRE AND FORCING THE NAVY TO ABANDON IT. THE KC ALSO HIT THE NEAK UONG AMMUNITION DUMP, DESTROYING SOME STORES THERE. HOWEVER, ENEMY GROUND ATTACKS AGAINST DEFENDERS AROUND NEAK LUONG AND BANAM MET WITH SCANT SUCCESS; ONE SUCH PROBE COST THE KC 50 SOLDIERS KILLED, AGAINST LIGHT FRIENDLY CASUALTIES, AND ANOTHER RESULTED IN 20 MORE COMMUNIST TROOPS KILLED. FOLLOWING THESE SETBACKS, KC PRESSURE AGAINST THE NEAK LUONG-BANAM PERIMETER EASED NOTICEABLY.

21. ON THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG OPPOSITE PHNOM PENH, FANK POSITIONS WERE UNDER PRESSURE MOST OF THE WEEK, WITH THE KC SUCCEEDING ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN

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INFILTRATION FANK DEFENSES. THE UNDERMANNED UNITS FOUGHT BACK WELL, HOWEVER, KILLED 62 ENEMY SOLDIERS IN ONE ENGAGEMENT, AND MANAGED TO REESTABLISH THEIR DEFENSE POSITIONS. ANOTHER AREA OF HARD FIGHTING CONTINUED TO BE THE 7TH DIVISION AREA NORTHWEST OF THE CAPITAL. GOVERNMENT FORCES SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES BUT EXACTED THEIR TOLL IN RETURN, KILLING OVER 150 KC DURING A THREE DAY PERIOD. THE AGGRESSIVE NEW DIVISION COMMANDER IS ATTEMPTING, WITHOUT SUCCESS AS YET, TO REOPEN THE ROAD TO THE DIVISION LOGISTICS BASE.

22. SOUTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH, RELATIVELY QUIET SINCE THE KC OFFENSIVE BEGAN, FANK LOST SOME GROUND. ONE POSITION ON ROUTE 1, WHICH PARALLEL THE MEKONG, WAS ABANDONED, AND ANOTHER ON THE WEST BANK OF THE BASSAC ALSO WAS LOST AND HAS NOT YET BEEN RETAKEN. BOTH IN THIS AREA AND SOUTHWEST OF THE CITY, THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT THE KC ARE USING A FORM OF TEAR GAS AGAINST FANK FORCES.

23. OUTSIDE OF PHNOM PENH, THE PRINCIPAL AREA OF CONCERN WAS IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE IN NORTHWESTERN CAMBODIA. KC TROOPS FORCED THE ABANDONMENT OF SEVERAL POSITIONS SOUTH OF BATTAMBANG CITY AS THE STEADY PROCESS OF EROSION IN THE PROVINCE WHICH HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR SOME MONTHS CONTINUED. OTHER PROVINCIAL CAPITALS, PARTICULARLY KAMPOT IN THE SOUTHWESTERN PART OF THE

COUNTRY, REPORTED SIGNIFICANT DECREASES IN COMMUNIST
ACTIVITY.
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